

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, at this time, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the following nominations en bloc: Calendar No. 188, 255, and 256; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Gwen Graham, of Florida, to be Assistant Secretary for Legislation and Congressional Affairs, Department of Education; Roberto Josue Rodriguez, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Department of Education; and Elizabeth Merrill Brown, of Maryland, to be General Counsel, Department of Education?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. CASEY. Thank you, Mr. President.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

## DEBT CEILING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on September 25, President Biden tweeted:

My Build Back Better Agenda costs zero dollars.

That is right. According to the President, a series of new, permanent entitlements and a massive expansion of government, the biggest expansion of government, at least, since the New Deal, is going to cost zero dollars—that from the President of the United States.

And the President has now been doubling down on that claim. On Monday, he once again tweeted:

The fact of the matter is my Build Back Better agenda costs zero dollars.

Well, no, Mr. President, the fact of the matter is your Build Back Better agenda costs \$3.5 trillion, at least. That is the minimum number. The Committee for Responsible Federal Budget, where the President's Treasury Secretary served on the board before joining the administration, estimates the cost at \$5 trillion or more.

Leaving that aside, even if the President has been merely trying to claim that his plan is fully paid for by tax hikes and other measures, to say that it would cost zero dollars is beyond ridiculous.

I mean, think about it. Let's say your college education was completely paid for by your parents. Did it then cost zero dollars? Of course not. It costs a lot of money—money that your parents likely were able to pay only because of a lot of hard work and sacrifices.

What if you saved up for a couple of years for your dream vacation, and now you have all the money that you need, down to the cost of your Uber and your hotel breakfasts, does that mean that your vacation is going to cost zero dollars? Of course, it doesn't.

The same thing applies when it comes to the Democrats' legislation. Even if Democrats add all the money they need to pay for every dollar of their massive spending spree, the pricetag still wouldn't be zero dollars. I mean, it just absolutely doesn't pass the sanity test for Americans.

The pricetag for this proposal is, at least minimum, \$3.5 trillion and likely much, much more. Presumably, what the President has been referring to when he makes the absurd claim that his spending bill will cost zero dollars is his assertion the bill won't add to the debt.

The problem is that isn't true either. Because the pay-fors in the Democrats' bill won't actually pay for the bill in its entirety. The tax hikes in the Democrats' legislation will actually only pay for about two-thirds of the bill's ostensible \$3.5 trillion pricetag.

The other revenue-raising components in the bill won't make up the difference. What are those other revenue-raising components? Well, a substantial part is increased IRS enforcement. Democrats claim they can get \$700 billion in more revenue by closing the tax gap, the difference between taxes owed and taxes paid.

There is no question that individuals shouldn't get away with cheating on their taxes. And there are, undoubtedly, reasonable measures we can take to strengthen enforcement and narrow the gap. Unfortunately, Democrats haven't proposed any reasonable measures.

Instead, the Democrats are proposing to, A, double the size of the IRS and, B, have the IRS snoop on Americans' bank accounts. That is right. Democrats want to double the size of the IRS and force banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions to provide details of individuals' spending to the Federal Government. Under the administration's proposal, once your withdrawals or deposits for the year exceed a certain amount—and that amount, by the way, if the President has his way, is \$600—your bank or credit union would be forced to report the details of your activity to the Federal Government.

So the Federal Government could end up with a record of every time you eat dinner out or pay your rent or buy a new jacket or a toaster oven. The invasion of privacy being talked about here is absolutely staggering.

We already have a mechanism in place to allow the IRS to view large transactions that might indicate potential criminal activity. We do not need the Federal Government monitoring every purchase that law-abiding Americans make from the App Store or how many times Americans buy a cup

of coffee, not to mention the incredible demands this reporting requirement would place on community banks and credit unions. Banks and credit unions around the country are worried about how they would manage to comply with the bill's reporting requirements.

Let's not forget that the Agency that would be receiving all of this information has a reputation for mishandling private data. In fact, the IRS was subject to a massive leak, or hack, of private taxpayer information mere months ago—information that somehow ended up in the hands of advocates at ProPublica—and neither Treasury nor the IRS has provided meaningful followup about that data breach, much less any accountability. Giving an already troubled Agency access to reams of additional private taxpayer information is a very bad idea.

Even if we granted that this massive invasion of privacy were worth it, the truth is that all of this additional enforcement still wouldn't provide the money that Democrats are claiming it would provide. Democrats claim that they can get \$700 billion from the bill's increased tax enforcement measures. The reality is more likely to be about \$200 billion lower, according to an analysis from the Wharton School of business. So Democrats would be doubling the size of an Agency with clear management issues and implementing a staggering invasion of taxpayer privacy to pay for a tiny fraction of their spending spree.

As I said, no taxpayer at any income level should be able to avoid paying the taxes he or she owes. I have actually signed on to cosponsor legislation that would look at responsible ways to strengthen IRS enforcement efforts. But Democrats' proposal to double the size of the IRS and track taxpayer spending should never—never—have seen the light of day. Even former IRS Commissioner John Koskinen, who served under Presidents Obama and Trump, said he thought that \$80 billion for the Agency was too much.

Taken together, the IRS enforcement on steroids and Democrats' massive tax hikes will still not be enough to pay for their multitrillion-dollar legislation, partly because the tax hikes may not bring in as much as the Democrats claim but also because Democrats have used a lot of budget gimmickry to disguise the true costs of their bill.

The standard method for analyzing the cost of a bill is a 10-year—10-year—budget window. So you look at what your bill would cost over 10 years, and that is how you get the cost of your bill. That is normally the way that it works around here.

Well, that is not exactly what the Democrats are doing. That child allowance in the Democrats' bill? Democrats have only counted the cost of that allowance through the year 2025. That allows Democrats to claim that the cost of that provision is around \$500 billion instead of the \$1.1 trillion the measure would actually cost over a decade.